

The Ministry of Marriage, Motherhood, and Making Home the Priority (Titus 2:4-5)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on July 27, 2008

www.goldcountrybaptist.org

“If a believer asked you what your ministry is, or where or how you serve, how would you answer? Would your answer to that question ever include your family?” I want to encourage you to view it that way, and not be ashamed to articulate your family as ministry priority. I want to encourage you wives and women especially today in this vital ministry of the home that is not encouraged enough. There are certainly things moms can do outside the home, but I want to persuade you that it is very biblical to view your ministry to your husband and children and your home priority as a ministry as real as any other in the body, an urgent and essential ministry that’s very beautiful and valuable in God’s eyes

Many in our world would want to persuade you otherwise, that real value can only be found in everything you do outside the home or to the neglect of home or family. But let’s look at what God says in His authoritative, inspired, inerrant, infallible, unchanging, all-sufficient and all-satisfying Word about the high calling of women and wives.

Titus 2:3-5 (NASB95) ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, ⁴ **so that they may encourage the young women** to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, **so that the word of God will not be dishonored.**

The verse ends with a “so that” statement, a purpose clause: the honoring of God’s Word is the ultimate concern here. The end of verse 5 makes clear that in this passage the glorifying of God’s Word is at stake in the way women, wives, and mothers minister. We may not tend to think of it this way, but this is a ministry – anything that exalts God’s Word is an essential ministry.

Don’t think that only preaching or the public reading of God’s Word or standing in honor of God’s Word as it’s read, that those are the only ways God’s Word can be exalted and lifted up, because Titus 2 says otherwise. Our Lord’s Day morning service is only a fraction of the week (a little more than an hour and fifteen minutes long) – but there is something many of you ladies can do virtually every hour of every day of the week that exalts God’s Word and honors God’s Word in real and tangible and powerful ways, to people He calls you to minister to.

You are not called to preach from the pulpit, but God has called you to give a living sermon by your lives that will testify of the amazing grace that has transformed your character. Yes, you are called to the gospel ministry in a sense as well, and as we’ll see as Titus 2 unfolds, the gospel of God’s glory and magnificent grace is at stake in how all of us live in our everyday lives.

Titus 2:10-12 (NASB95) ¹⁰ ... showing all good faith **so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior** in every respect. ¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age

The doctrine of God our Savior is not adorned, according to verse 10, by a beautiful building or stained-glass church, it is adorned by beautiful lives changed by grace and living unstained by the world.

Do our home lives adorn Christ? Do you interact with your spouse and children and love your families in a way that honors God's Word, or do you cause God's Holy Word to be dishonored instead?

Look at Titus 1:6, where it's interesting that when Paul instructs Titus on appointing *ministers* in the church called elders who are above reproach, he begins with faithfulness at home, in his marriage and his children before other ministry. That's exactly the same order that Titus 2:4 discusses a godly woman, starting with "loving their husbands, and loving their children" and Titus 1:6 discusses the same relationships in the same order. And Titus 1:8 begins with hospitality and it also lists a number of the same traits of the godly woman in Titus 2. It's only in Titus 1:9 that Paul begins to discuss the *public* ministry of the godly man – most of this passage focuses on his *private* ministry character, especially his home life, a ministry that precedes and preserves the other.

If you go back to 1 Timothy 3, the other passage on office-holding ministers, Paul makes clear there that your family life does have a bearing on your ministry. In fact, faithfulness and ministry to spouse and children comes *before* and qualifies *for* further ministry

1 Timothy 3:1-2 (NASB95) ¹ It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. ² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, **the husband of one wife** [*lit. "one-woman man" with the idea of faithfulness to his wife*], temperate, prudent, respectable, **hospitable**, able to teach

*Notice marriage comes first, and hospitality listed even before teaching

⁴ *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

If our own household and family is not tended to, God doesn't want us serving publicly in His household

¹¹ Women *must likewise be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, **faithful in all things**. ¹² Deacons must be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.

God's Word is clear: Be faithful in ministering to your own family, which is a ministry that comes first, and only then should you be pursuing extracurricular ministries beyond.

Earlier this year we studied Ephesians 4:11-12 which speaks of the ministry of elders/pastors and teachers which is to equip the rest of the church for their ministry (*diakonia*) – a word synonymous with service. And that word is not only talking about what happens on the Lord's Day here or on campus, ministry and service is an ongoing way of life and it very much includes your home life and the vital ministry of faithful women to their husbands and children.

Just to review, if you weren't here last week, I'm not trying to be clever in speaking of ministry. I'm not just using this terminology to try and help discouraged moms feel like they have an important ministry in God's plan. I'm truly trying to be faithful to the original language of the New Testament and the original context. The same Greek word translated "ministry" in Ephesians 4, as I pointed out last time, is used of ladies like Martha who welcomed Jesus into her home and she was serving him (*diakonia*) or seeking to minister to him by her hospitality.

How you serve your spouse and your children and shepherd and disciple your children and how you use your home to be hospitable to others is not only a ministry, biblically speaking, it's to be a Christ-centered God-glorifying one.

When Romans 12 lists the gifts of the Spirit, it summarizes them as gifts of speaking and gifts of *service* (same word translated "ministry" in many places) and neither is superior to the other, both are vitally needed. And in that same chapter that lists preaching and prophecy, it lists practicing hospitality. 1 Peter 4 similarly refers to the speaking gifts and the serving gifts and in the context there it commands hospitality and that passage ends by saying that both speaking and serving gifts are "so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." How you serve your family and how you use your home to serve others glorifies God like anything else, if I read the Word of God rightly.

There are 3 ministry categories in Titus 2:4-5 that glorify God, honor God's Word, and adorn the gospel of grace:

1. Ministry in Marriage
2. Ministry in Motherhood
3. Ministry in Making Home the Priority

MINISTRY IN MARRIAGE

⁴ that they [the women] may encourage the young women to love their husbands,

In verses 6 and following Titus himself is to instruct the young men, but here it's the women who are to instruct the young women personally on an ongoing basis. If you weren't here last week, you'll need to get that message - the "older women" are those more mature in the Lord typically beyond childbearing years and farther ahead in life than the young women and moms they are to teach.

Verse 4 says these women are to *encourage* the younger women, and in my translation the marginal note says this word can be translated "train" (which ESV has). The KJV has "teach" but it's a different word than the word "teach" in v. 3. The NKJV is better with "admonish." It's an uncommon Greek word that comes from the same root word we saw in v. 2 where most other translations have sensible or self-controlled, which we discussed last week. This is the verb form of the same root, and it can literally be rendered "bring to their senses" (*BAGD*, 802) to help show them what sound thinking is (*NET Bible Notes*) rather than the world's thinking. The old Geneva Bible from 1500s has one of the most literal renderings "instruct the young women to be sober-minded."

It is the calling of someone to responsibility, and it is the *women's* role especially to call the younger women to be reminded of their role and brought back to their senses, to first, love their husbands. Since the days of the OT, as Jer. 9:20 alludes to, it was expected that women would instruct their daughters in the way of life. Women must urge sense into women living in an unwise world that need to be wised up, it's perhaps a figurative, sobering, "slap in the face." Philo and Josephus and numerous well-known ancient Greek writers used this term in distinction from neutral terms for educating. This is a stronger word for a jolting "call to return to the senses ... wake-up call."¹

This is certainly needed for those in our generation as well who have been brainwashed by feminism and pop culture and worldly thinking about woman's roles and who need to be snapped out of muddled and mushy thinking to the truth by fellow godly gals.

The noun form of this word appears in verse 5 where it says these young women are to be sensible, and then in v. 6 it says the young men are also to be sensible or sober-minded as well. The word is also used for older men in v. 2. It's a key word in this section. And here the godly mature women are to urge this sense and sensibility and sober biblical thinking in younger women so they will love their husbands as first priority. Not just live with them, *love them*.

This word for "love of her man" (*philandros*) includes the ideas of fondness, friendship, affection toward your most-liked companion. Literally the young women were to continually be (present tense) lovingly fond of their husbands and by implication, not fond of or overly friendly with men other than their own husband.

The active voice in the Greek (subject exerts action by a volitional choice) signifies that the young wife is to exhibit a willing determined love that is not based on a husband's worthiness or how lovable he is or how "in love" you feel, it's based on God's command which is to be lovingly followed by affectionate hearts.

John MacArthur writes:

Paul is not speaking of romantic or sexual love, which certainly have a proper place in marriage, but of a committed **love** that godly wives choose to have for their husbands, just as godly husbands choose to have for their wives (Eph. 5:25, 28) ... Even unlovable, uncaring, unfaithful, and ungrateful [spouses] are to be loved. This sort of **love** of husbands and wives for each other involves unqualified devotedness and is a friendship that is strong and deep. If a wife does not truly love her husband, she must, in obedience to the Lord, train herself to love him. Contrary to popular thinking, love that is carefully built and nurtured is not artificial. It is much more common that spontaneous, "bells and whistles" romances prove to be the ones that are artificial and short-lived. The principle is reciprocal and applies equally to husbands [*who also must love*].

Training yourself to love involves doing loving things for the other person, whether or not you feel like doing them. It involves putting their interests and welfare above your own. It involves sacrificial giving of yourself to others for their sakes, not for the sake of appreciation or returned love or favor. "For if you love those who love you ... what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?" (Mt 5:46) ...

When you sacrificially serve others, it becomes almost impossible *not* to love them. Where there is genuine practical love, genuine emotional love is sure to follow ...

The first command is simple and unambiguous: **Young women**, which in this context refers to young wives, are **to love their husbands**. There are no conditions or exceptions. It is not simply that love of **husbands** is a virtue but that not loving them is a sin.² [*Husbands are in sin as well who fail to love their wives as the Bible defines love, both fileo and agape*]

It doesn't mean you agree on everything with your spouse, but it does mean you agree that you will obey God's Word to love. The late Ruth Bell Graham was a Presbyterian who married Baptist preacher Billy Graham and who I believe remained a Presbyterian till the day she died.

She said it was a great day in her life when she realized it was not her job to change her husband. She has been quoted as saying "It's my job to love Billy and God's job to change him."

In fact, biblical love is loving them "just as I am" (as they are now) *even if* God does not change them. As 1 Peter 3 says, it may in fact be your loving submission and spirit that God uses to change him, even an unbelieving husband. 1 Corinthians 7 says it is possible for a wife to be the tool God uses to sanctify her husband. But regardless of the spouse's response, God's Word calls both husband and wife to biblical love.

The early church father Chrysostom pointed out that love for husband is mentioned first and is emphasized as the chief point because the other qualities in this passage flow from it.³ And if you can do what it says in the beginning of verse 4, it makes the end of verse 5 a whole lot easier (being submissive).

Verse 4-5 begin and close on the marriage relationship of these young ladies. The end of verse 5 speaks of women being submissive or "**subject to their own husbands, so that the Word of God not be dishonored**" or blasphemed. Unbelievers can read the Bible, they can understand what it says and means, and when professing Christian women disregard God's Word in regards to their husband relationship, the Word can be blasphemed. Certainly it can be blasphemed by ungodly husbands when their wives blatantly disobey God's Word and don't submit to their husbands, and others who know her may discredit God's Word as well.

You might say, "But Pastor Phil, you don't understand how hard it is to live with this jerk and love him or submit to him." You may be right. And I know I am not easy myself for Jaime to love or live with sometimes. And believe it or not, ladies, sometimes it's hard for us guys to love you. *But it's not about me! It's not about you!* Something far bigger is at stake here -- the glorifying of God and His Word! Don't love or obey based on your spouse, do it for the Lord's sake, as Paul says elsewhere in these types of contexts, "as unto the Lord." Do it focused on the Savior, not the sinner!

If I can address the men directly for a moment (including myself), guys don't make it hard for your wife to love you and like you. To my shame, I know I can make it hard for Jaime to love me. The fact Paul has to urge wives to love their husbands means we're not that naturally lovable to live with! It's hard for them to even like us at times, which is part of the Greek word here for love – women, *like* your husbands, love them as friends with affection, emotions.

And something to notice in each of the NT passages that discuss husband and wife roles: the husband is never told to *make* his wife submit (there *were* verb forms for that). He's always told to love. He's not to abuse his authority or lord over or disregard her; he is to live with her in an understanding sensitive way as 1 Peter 3 says.

When wives are told to submit, it is the middle voice in Greek, which means it is something she herself needs to give voluntarily and willingly and lovingly. She must do it, according to God's Word, but it is she who must do it. And you mature women must admonish younger women to do this to honor God's Word.

Another note: the passages also consistently speak of a wife submitting only to *her own* husband, not to men in general. There's nothing inherently superior about man over every woman, but when two choose to covenant as one in a relationship on God's terms, those terms are loving submission and loving headship.

The two virtues at the beginning of verse 5 probably refer to sensibleness and purity in marriage. The first word was used as the cardinal virtue of the modest wife.

“Sensible” or “discreet” (NKJV) relates to her modesty or behavior in prudence towards the opposite sex, self-control. It includes restraint and modesty that protects the honor of her husband.

The 2nd word in verse 5 “pure” also for wives may relate especially to their purity in marriage. Of course younger unmarried women also need to be exhorted to purity and modesty, and I can't give you all the specifics on that from the pulpit today. Godly gals, it is your God-given responsibility to teach younger ladies how to be pure and modest and sensible or discreet as godly young women.

THE MINISTRY OF MOTHERHOOD

Verse 4 began with “lovers of their husbands” and the next phrase in verse 4 is especially for young moms: “*lovers of their children.*” Both qualities of being a husband-lover and children-lover were found in inscriptions from NT times commending a good wife.

The fact that Paul addresses the younger women initially here as those who are married and with children in this text was the norm in Crete but in no way should that make you any of you feel excluded from this ministry or from this message.

The mention of husband and children in Titus 1 for the men who lead the church, as we saw before, doesn't mean that single or childless men are unable to serve in any official way in the church. Paul is simply speaking to the normal situation in those days, but the character qualities apply to all.

Titus 2:4-5 addresses “younger women” and although it will mention a husband and children, the character qualities are such that all should exemplify. No one can tune out of this message.

Young unmarried ladies – this is the type of person you need to be striving to be now. And certainly you can support families by caring for children and loving children whatever your life stage.

Young unmarried men – this is the type of lady you should be looking for (forget what our world says you should look for)

Married men – be encouraging of these things in your wife. There's plenty of discouragements in our world against them fulfilling this role; be one who encourages them toward this. If you're raising daughters, this is what you should be raising them to be

Older women – as we saw last time, older means farther along than the younger wives and young moms. Women at the next stage of life or who are middle-aged or older or mature in the Lord, this passage is especially for you because God’s Word says it is your responsibility, not mine, to be modeling and mentoring and teaching these things in more detail to younger women (and they don’t have to be married yet for you to teach them these things).

Here it’s “teach them...to love their children.” Teach them what biblical love is.

If they think it’s not loving to spank or discipline their children, teach them that God’s Word says you actually hate if you spare the rod. Teach them love.

Challenge their thinking as to whether it’s really best and most loving to their kids to drop little ones off at daycare to pursue your career or fund your lifestyle or to give your kids more stuff.

Help them think soberly and sensibly whether it’s more loving to have someone else raise your kids so you can get them a bigger place for them to live and play.

Teach the young moms how to be loving to their children when they think they’re going to lose their mind and pull out their hair with impatience and the difficulties of motherhood.

Most importantly, teach them how to teach and disciple their children in the ways of God from God’s Word in an ungodly world and how to do it in all of life (Deut. 6).

This is the essential ministry of motherhood.

2 Timothy 1:5 (NASB95) ⁵ For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and **your mother Eunice**, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well.

Apparently Timothy’s father was not saved, but the gospel was passed down from one mother to her daughter and then to her son

2 Timothy 3:15-17 (NASB95) ¹⁵ and that **from childhood you have known** the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for **teaching**, for reproof, for correction, for **training** in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

This is the most important ministry and best way you can love your children – not giving them all the toys they want, but giving them all the *truth they need* to be saved and sanctified and satisfied in the sweet and sufficient Word of the God who loves them and you.

Proverbs begins with instruction of a son in the fear of the Lord, and Solomon writes “do not forsake your mother’s teaching; indeed they are a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck” (1:8b-9), a very picturesque value of the visible blessing of a mother’s teaching

I heard of a survey where they asked some 600 young people what the most beautiful word in the English language was to them, and reportedly over 400 of them responded with the word “mother.”

It's a wonderful impact a mother who loves her children can have on them into their adulthood. What do the 300 pound football players say when the camera comes to them? (Hi, Mom). Dads, of course, were the ones who taught them how to throw and catch and play, but never underestimate the impact on a life by a loving mom

The book of Proverbs has much to say about the important role of mothers in rearing, teaching, and how they should be honored for their role as mothers. And we have examples of mothers passing along truth there, including the most famous chapter 31 which is a mother passing on truth of what a true godly woman looks like, the type of woman her son should look for and the type of woman daughters should look to be like (and grown women, too).

In ancient Pergamum, an epitaph expresses one man's appreciation for these traits in Titus 2:4 using the same Greek words: *Julius Bassus to Otacilia Polla my sweetest wife, **who loved her husband and loved her children and lived with me blamelessly for thirty years.***⁴ What a beautiful picture of what's beautiful to God's eyes.

THE MINISTRY OF MAKING HOME THE PRIORITY

⁵ *to be* sensible, pure, **workers at home**, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

At the Providence Christian School kindergarten graduation held here last month, they asked each of the kids the question what they wanted to be when they grew up. There were numerous answers given by the 4-5 year olds:

Firefighter ... dentist ... teacher ... a boxer ...
 One boy said "a doctor by day and a Transformer by night"
 What was neat was to hear many little girls "a mommy"

That's a God-given and beautiful desire, spoken from innocent young girls who haven't been influenced by feminism or a modern world's thinking yet. That desire is better than any career or job, and compared to carrying a briefcase and charging down Wall Street, motherhood may be more demanding yet more fulfilling and of course mothering and homemaking is a full-time job in itself.

When Jaime and I were celebrating our 10-year anniversary on a cruise, Jaime got called up on stage of one of the comedy shows, and the host interviewed her and asked her where she was from, her name, if she had kids, how many (3 little kids), and then "what do you do?" She said "I stay home and take care of my kids!" Jaime had multiple different ladies on the cruise come up and say how much they appreciated her answer; like it was some big deal, which I guess nowadays it is getting more and more unusual to hear. Fifty years ago it was a whole different scene, and very unusual to hear of wives worked outside the home, especially with young kids or to the neglect of the home. Whether Christian or not, they recognized the difficulty, if not impossibility, of working full-time or even many part-time jobs without neglecting duty to their home, children, and family that they took more serious than more money.

Has the feminist movement delivered the happiness it has promised in the decades since the sixties? Are women truly liberated and fulfilled and happier and families stronger and children more stable today than they were in the 50's? The "younger women" of Titus 2 began joining the work force en masse in the last several decades (over 80% in some studies), and other statistics have risen along with it: extramarital affairs have increased exponentially with co-workers as unmarried men and women spent larger amounts of time together than in the past; one could argue that economic difficulties actually have gotten worse with increased lifestyles from 2 incomes that makes it harder for moms to care for kids; family stress has gone through the roof; and doctors prescribe drugs for resulting problems (which has grown to multi-billion dollar industry in that timeframe), and sadly, millions of young kids are growing up without the nurturing daily love of a mother, and our society is seeing the fruit of that in this generation.

- 56% of American women in 2006 with infants (under age 1) are in the work force and 69% of those work full-time.
- It's even a little higher for married women with infants (70%). Believe it or not, that percent of working *single* moms with infants is lower than those that are married (3% lower).⁵
- The Bureau of Labor statistics, from a 2004 message:⁶ 50% of mothers go back to work within 3 months of having a child. All but 14% of those do it full-time⁷ (with people Jaime and I knew and used to work with, 6 weeks was common, and a few would go back to work in less than a month).
- Some studies say 68% of women would like to be home with their kids if they could⁸ but their difficult decisions and debts make it a real challenge to fulfill their God-given desire and role. Older women, you need to be helping younger women to think sensibly, biblically and to plan and structure your life differently than the rest of the world.
- The same U.S. Bureau of labor said 72% of moms go back to work after 1 year. 65% overall of married mothers with kids *under the age of six* work outside the home

Husbands, a big part of this responsibility falls on you. In 1 Timothy 5, Paul says that if any man does not provide for his own, especially his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Taking care of your family doesn't mean keeping up with the Joneses – to honor biblical priorities you probably need to live quite a different lifestyle than your neighbors.

1 Thessalonians 2:7 (NASB95) ⁷ But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing *mother* tenderly cares for her own children.

It was obvious to God's people that a loving mother of nursing age or nursery age kids would tenderly care for her own children and not leave that role to someone else. The biblical terms for such young children could be used for kids several years old.

I'm not saying wives can not work outside the home ever. We do know that Priscilla and Aquila worked in a trade alongside Paul as a husband and wife team and in ministry with him, although there's no indication that their help in church planting was to the neglect of young children. The Bible is not saying women can't work, it says *the priority is working at home*. Don't let that vital ministry suffer for any other pursuit, whether spiritual or secular. Home is the biblical priority #1 and it is still priority whether you have school age children or not.

You may be more available to do more things later in life when your kids are out of the home without neglecting your priorities. The Proverbs 31 woman worked and was industrious, and while much of her description revolves around her home priority, she did things outside the home *for* the home and *in the context of* the home, but did not neglect her family, in fact the chapter makes clear she fulfilled the Titus 2 priorities when you study it.

In Titus 1:5, the word “kind” probably goes along with working at home. It could either modify it, i.e, “good worker at home” (efficient) or it may emphasize the kindness needed when tending to children and others in the home (guests in the home, or for the rich, slaves). The emphasis clearly is on the home as priority and where it’s not, God’s Word is dishonored, even blasphemed.

1 Timothy 5:13-15 (NASB95) ¹³ At the same time they also learn *to be* idle, as they go **around from house to house**; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper *to mention*. ¹⁴ Therefore, I want younger ... to get married, **bear children, keep house**, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; ¹⁵ for some have already turned aside to follow **Satan**.

The text says women who bear children and don’t keep house give the enemy an occasion for reproach. This text is almost identical to Titus 2:5 and it speaks stronger of women who turn from their God-given priority that they turn aside to follow Satan! Those who would want to overthrow this verse about a woman’s priority may sound *sensitive*, but 1 Timothy 5 says that’s *Satanic*. That’s stronger than I would say it, but that is what God’s Word says.

Satan has been working to get women to usurp their role and relationship in the family with their husband ever since the garden of Eden. He promises liberation if women will throw aside biblical roles and responsibilities, but his real goal is to put them in bondage to sinful ways of thinking. *We need a Titus 2 movement to truly liberate women*. Young women need to know God’s truth and the truth will set them free, and you ladies need to tell them.

Philip Towner has pointed out that both in Ephesus and Crete where Timothy and Titus ministered, Paul may be responding to a 1st century ‘cultural movement that [a writer named] Winter has documented. If the values of the “new woman” were in fact being countered by Paul ... then there is already in the text sensitivity to the disruption to traditional values addressed by numerous ancient writers. Some decades ago Wayne Meeks set out the argument for the emergence of an emancipation trend in Greco-Roman society ... Rejection of the dress codes synonymous with modesty and chastity, the emergence of well-to-do women in the Forum and the courts, and rejection of the values of the stable household (expressed in a desire to avoid or terminate pregnancy) add up to a movement with values capable of disrupting the church.’⁹

As I read that, the thought that jumped out to me was “Wow, there’s really nothing new under the sun, as Solomon said.”

And when his book of Proverbs ends, it’s on the high note of godly feminine virtues – the Proverbs 31 woman is the goal for the Titus 2 women and much of the language is the same.

Proverbs 31:26-28 (NASB95) ²⁶ She opens her mouth in **wisdom**, And the **teaching** of **kindness** is on her tongue. ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of **her household**, And does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ **Her children** rise up and bless her; **Her husband** *also*, and he praises her

This is the type of woman that Paul is calling on in Titus 2 to minister in the church by teaching the younger women in wisdom to also have kindness on their tongue, and that they also would look well to the ways of their household, and that their love for their children and husband would cause them to bless her. What a beautiful portrait of what is so beautiful in God's eyes.

R. C. Sproul, in the first time I heard him speak at Shepherd's Conference, shared an occasion when he had moved from his pastoral responsibilities to teach as a seminary professor, and a young student asked him (referring to the time when his focus was preaching ministry in a local church): "What was it like when you were just a pastor?"

Sproul's reply: "In my teaching career, I've always taken the position that I should respect any genuine question that a student asks, and should never be angered or offended by an honest question. But you just broke that record.

What do you mean, "just a pastor"?

As if there's some higher calling [for men] under the sun?"

About ten years ago, R.C. was asked to pastor a church in Orlando and he said it's been the most exciting enterprise of his life. He said he counted it no greater honor than to be present with people who are on the frontlines of ministry as shepherds and as pastors to the people of God. And he said "God forbid that you ever hear me say *just a pastor!*"

When people ask you what you do, be careful with "just a mom." What do you mean, *just a mom?* As if there's some higher calling for godly women under the sun, that moms have inferior ministry? Bible-loving Christians especially should work to remove the phrase from our vocabulary "*just a mom/homemaker/housewife.*"

Here's what one lady wrote in to Ann Landers years ago:

I'm so tired of all those ignorant people who come up to my husband and ask him if his wife has full-time job or if she's "just a house-wife." . . . Here's my job description: I'm a wife, mother, friend, confidant, personal advisor, lover, referee, peacemaker, housekeeper, laundress, chauffeur, interior decorator, gardener, painter, wall paperer, dog groomer, veterinarian, manicurist, barber, seamstress, appointment manager, financial planner, bookkeeper, money manager, personal secretary, teacher, disciplinarian, entertainer, psychoanalyst, nurse, diagnostician, public relations expert, dietitian and nutritionist, baker, chef, fashion coordinator and letter writer for both sides of the family. I am also a travel agent, speech therapist, plumber and automobile maintenance and repair expert. . . .

From the studies done, it would cost more than \$750,000 a year to replace me. I took time out of my busy day to write this letter, Ann, because there are still ignorant people who believe a housewife is nothing more than a baby sitter who sits on her behind all day and looks at soap operas.¹⁰

Heaven forbid that we use the phrases “just a housewife” or “just a homemaker” or “just a mom.” Titus 2 says there’s no higher calling for a woman or wife than to marriage, motherhood, and making home her priority. It’s not the same ministry as a preacher, but it is an urgently vital ministry in the eyes of God, a ministry that shapes the next generation one child at a time, and a ministry that when done faithfully by godly gals, is a visual sermon in and of itself of the transforming grace of God that makes it possible.

Let’s see if we can’t remove the word “just” from our vocabulary when speaking of these Titus 2 ministry priorities. Let’s be a church that encourages and uplifts women and wives and moms and homeschoolers and those with little kids and those struggling with teenage kids and struggling single moms and those striving to be faithful with unsaved husbands, and let’s be a church where the godly women and older women are Titus 2 women who will model and mentor the rest so that God’s Word will not be dishonored and where God’s doctrine will be adorned and His grace on display.

¹ Phillip Towner, *NICNT*, 725-26.

² MacArthur, J. (1996). *Titus* (p. 82). Chicago: Moody Press.

³ “Homily 4,” *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* 13:532.

⁴ Vincent, Marvin R. (2002). *Word Studies in the New Testament* (4:341-342).

⁵ <http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/WorkingMothersMarch2008.pdf> ; page 1 and 2 (3rd bullet point).

⁶ As cited by Dan Dumas, “Iron Sharpens Iron, Part 4”

http://www.gracechurch.org/ministries/audioloads.asp?ministry_id=45&dcat=Titus

⁷ <http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/WorkingMothersMarch2008.pdf> ; page 3, footnote 2.

⁸ According to *Family Circle Magazine* survey cited by www.preceptaustin.org

⁹ Towner, 222-23.

¹⁰ Ann Landers, May, 1988, quoted in “Mom, You’re Incredible,” by Linda Weber, *Focus on the Family*, 1994, pp. 23-24.